

**CLAIM AMENDMENTS**

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim [[67]] 68, wherein the cutting means is adapted for removing a strip of material from the cast.

3. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protection member is supported by the body via a connecting member which is coupled at one end to the body and at another end to the protection member.

4. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the connecting member is adjustable in order to vary the distance between the body and the protection member.

5. (Currently Amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim [[67]] 68, wherein [[the]] said first portion and protection member [[is]] are releasably coupled to the housing [[body]].

6. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protection member comprises a contact surface for contacting the skin of a patient when the cast-cutter is in use.

7. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 6, wherein said contact surface is smooth in order to reduce the friction between the contact surface and the skin of a patient.

8. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 6, wherein the contact surface has a substantially planar surface.

9. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 6, wherein the contact surface has a curved surface.

10 (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protection member comprises tapered edges in order to be smoothly guided under a cast.

11. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protecting member has a leading edge tapered on at least one side.

12. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 11, wherein a leading edge of the protecting member is tapered on both sides to form a wedge profile.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first and second portions of the cutting means each include a single cutting edge.

15. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means comprises a first portion defining an aperture having a cutting edge, and a second portion having a cutting edge and adapted to be received within said aperture.

16. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 15, wherein the first portion defines two apertures each having a cutting edge, and the second portion defines two elements each having a respective cutting edge and adapted to be received with a respective aperture of the first portion.

17. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 16, wherein the apertures are elongated slots and are aligned parallel to each other.

18. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first portion of the cutting means is stationary, and the second portion is moveable.

19. – 23. (Canceled)

24. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the respective cutting edges of the first and second portions are provided as inserts which are secured to the first and second portions respectively.

25. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 24, wherein the inserts are releasably secured to the respective first and second portions.

26. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means are adapted to shear discrete fragments of material from a cast.

27. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 26, wherein discrete fragments of material removed from a cast are passed through the second portion of the cutting means and subsequently ejected at a location removed from the point of cutting.

28. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 26, wherein discrete fragments of material removed from a cast are ejected from below the cutting means.

29. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 26, wherein discrete fragments of material removed from a cast are ejected from the rear of the cutting means.

30. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means are adapted to shear a continuous strip of material from a cast.

31. (Currently Amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim [[67]] 68, wherein a leading edge of the second portion of the cutting means is chamfered.

32. (Currently Amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim [[67]] 68, wherein the first portion defines an aperture which is chamfered at one side.

33. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means is adapted to remove both discrete fragments and continuous strips of material from a cast.

34. (Currently Amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim [[67]] 68, wherein [[the]] said cutting means assembly is adapted to remove continuous strips of material from a cast and the first portion of the cutting means comprises a strip exit to allow a strip of the cast which is being removed to pass therethrough.

35. (Previously Presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 34, wherein the strip exit comprises tapered sides, which taper outwards, away from the aperture of the first portion.

36. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means is operated by electric drive means.

37. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means is operated by hydraulic drive means.

38. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means is operated by pneumatic drive means.

39. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cast-cutter further comprises a normally open activation switch.

40. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cast-cutter comprises a safety switch which has to be activated before the cast-cutter can be operated.

41. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cast-cutter further comprises a safety guard disposed around the cutting means.

42. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 41, wherein the guard is permanently fixed in place.

43. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 41, wherein the guard is retractable.

44. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 43, wherein the guard includes a safety switch such that the cast-cutter may only be operated when the safety guard is positioned correctly in place.

45. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 41, wherein the safety guard is substantially transparent.

46. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cast-cutter further comprises means for collecting the sections of a cast which have been removed.

47. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 46, wherein the collecting means comprises a container releasably attached to the body portion of the device.

48. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 46, wherein the collecting means is a separate receptacle located remote from the cast-cutter and connected thereto by a conduit.

49. (Withdrawn) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein cast-cutter comprises extraction means to assist in drawing fragments or strips of cast material away from the cutting means.

50. (Withdrawn) A method of removing a cast from a patient, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a cast cutter having shearing cutting means and a protecting member, wherein the cutting means is adapted to cut material by a shearing action by the interaction of first and second portions, said second portion being pivotally mounted relative to said first portion and movable

along an arcuate path towards the first portion, each portion comprising at least one cutting edge which in use cooperate to produce a shearing strain in a material position therebetween;

placing the protecting member adjacent to the skin of the patient such that the protecting member is located between the skin of the patient and the cutting means;

aligning the cutting means with an end of the cast; and

activating and moving said cast-cutter along the length of the cast to remove a strip of material therefrom, allowing the cast to be removed from the patient.

51. (Withdrawn) A method of removing a cast from a patient as claimed in claim 50, the method further comprising the steps of:

placing the protecting member of the cast-cutter adjacent to the skin of the patient and aligning the cutting means with an alternative end portion of the cast; and

activating and moving the cast-cutter along the length of the cast to allow the cast to be removed in two portions.

52. – 67. (Canceled)

68. (Currently Amended) A cast-cutter for use in removing a cast from a patient, the cast-cutter comprising:

a ~~[[body]]~~ housing;

~~a cutting means supported on the body~~ assembly extending from said housing and configured to cut substantially perpendicularly through a cast arranged in a cast plane, said cutting means assembly comprising:

a stationary first portion rigidly affixed to said housing during operation, and

a moveable second portion, ~~said second portion being~~ supported for pivotal motion relative to the first portion,

wherein each portion comprises a single cutting edge configured to cooperate to cut along a common cutting plane which is aligned substantially perpendicularly with the cast plane;

said stationary portion including a protection member supported by the body and positioned on one side of the cutting cast plane to be positioned between the cast being operated upon by the cutting means assembly and [(the)] a patient [(,)] to protect the skin of the patient; and

an electric drive disposed within said housing supported on the body and drivingly connected to said second portion to pivot said second portion relative to said first portion through [[a]] an arcuate path which moves the single cutting edge of the second portion through the cast plane from one side thereof and causes a cast positioned between the cutting edges of the first and second portions in the cast plane to be pressed against the single cutting edge of the stationary first portion, such that the respective single cutting edges of the first and second portions effect cutting through the cast plane from opposing sides by a shearing action.

69. (New) A cast-cutter for use in removing a cast from a patient, comprising:

a housing;

a protection member rigidly affixed to said housing when said cast-cutter is in operation in operation;

a cutting assembly extending from said housing, said cutting assembly being positioned between said housing and said protection member,

wherein the cutting assembly is configured to cut substantially perpendicularly through a cast arranged in a cast plane, said cutting assembly further comprising:

a stationary first portion provided on the protection member to be fixed relative to the body during operation, and

a moveable second portion supported for pivotal motion relative to said first portion, wherein each portion comprises a single cutting edge configured to cooperate to establish a shearing action to cut through the cutting plane from opposing sides thereof; and

an electric drive disposed within said housing and drivingly connected to said second portion to pivot said second portion relative to said first portion through an arcuate path to effect cutting through the cast plane from opposing sides by a shearing action.

70. (New) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 68, wherein the cutting means is adapted for removing a strip of material from the cast.

71. (New) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 68, wherein said first portion and protection member are releasably coupled to the housing.

72. (New) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 68, wherein a leading edge of the second portion of the cutting means is chamfered.

73. (New) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 68, wherein the first portion defines an aperture which is chamfered at one side.

74. (New) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 68, wherein said cutting assembly is adapted to remove continuous strips of material from a cast and the first portion of the cutting means comprises a strip exit to allow a strip of the cast which is being removed to pass therethrough.